April 1, 2025

The undersigned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and anti-trafficking leaders who support ending human trafficking, write in support of H.R. 1379, the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2025 (TSRA) introduced by Representatives Fry (R-SC) Rep. Lieu (D-CA) and Rep. Wagner (R-MO) in the House of Representatives. A companion bill is pending introduction in the Senate soon.

The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2025 provides relief to trafficking survivors who have been unjustly criminalized as a result of their trafficking victimization. Too often, trafficking victims are arrested and convicted of criminal offenses directly related to their victimization[1].Though many states have a statute for human trafficking survivors to access relief from criminal records which resulted from trafficking, there is currently no legal framework at the federal level for trafficking survivors to either avoid unjust criminalization at the outset and/or address the harmful effects of having been charged and convicted of crimes resulting from their victimization[2]. The TSRA helps to address both of those gaps.

The legislation would allow survivors of human trafficking with federal records for certain crimes committed as a direct result of their trafficking situation to vacate convictions and expunge arrest records.[2] It would also allow for an affirmative defense for victims of human trafficking to assert at the outset of the criminal justice process. Finally, the bill would expressly permit Department of Justice (DOJ) grants to allow for legal representation for survivors including proceedings related to vacatur, expungement and other post-conviction relief measures.

Many survivors have a criminal record as a result of being trafficked. This criminal record impedes survivors from moving forward with their lives, including impacting opportunities for employment, housing and rental applications, loans for higher education, and purchasing their own home. This legislation recognizes the injustice of leaving trafficking survivors to carry convictions for crimes that resulted from their victimization, and instead creates a pathway for healing and restoration.

As trafficking survivor and advocate Hollie Nadel stated, “Many survivors during their trafficking victimization may experience ‘forced criminality,’ in which traffickers coerce their victims into committing crimes to profit the traffickers. As a result, trafficking victims may face unjust prosecution and punishment for their traffickers' crimes. My eight years of abuse - abuse that a judge called akin to torture - involved involuntary domestic servitude, labor trafficking, sex trafficking and finally, forced marriage. I was under constant threat and fear for my life and for the safety of my loved ones. I was made to live out of suitcases and was isolated from those who could help me. I took actions under extreme duress to survive. I received no profit from the crimes of my traffickers, only suffering. And yet today, along with so many other survivors, I pay the price for my traffickers' crimes. The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act will provide recourse to right this injustice that I and so many survivors face. It will help to restore faith in a system that is meant to protect, rather than punish us.”

This legislation passed the House Judiciary Committee in the 118th Congress, and **the undersigned groups urge you to co-sponsor the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act and to support its passage when it comes to the floor or a committee on which you serve.**

[1] Yasmin Vafa & Rebecca Epstein, Criminalized Survivors: Today’s Abuse to Prison Pipeline for Girls (2023), rights4girls.org/criminalizedsurvivorsreport

[2] Sidney McCoy, Fact Sheet: Protecting Survivors from Unjust Criminalization (2024), sharedhope.org/2022/06/14/unjust-criminalization/

3Strands Global Foundation
A21
Allies Against Slavery
Alternative Solutions
ANEW Life International
Ascend Consulting
Bekah Speaks Out
Bridge Network
Bridge2Future
California Catholic Conference
Campaign Against Human Trafficking - CAHT
Catholic Sister
Compassion First
CRST Tribal Education Agency
Engage Together
EverFree
FLITE Center
Free the Slaves
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Generate Hope
Global Hope 365
Heart Dance Foundation
Ho'ola Na Pua
Hope for Justice
Institute for Survivor Care
International Sanctuary
Interparliamentary Taskforce on Human Trafficking
J.D. Beck Consulting
Journey Out
Kaleido Incorporated
Legacy of Hope International, INC.
Lighthouse for Life
Liluye
Love146
Lynn's Warriors
McIntosh Advocacy and Consulting
Mentari
Mujeres en Resistencia
My House
My Name My Voice
National Center on Sexual Exploitation
National Council of Catholic Women
New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking
North Carolina Stop Human Trafficking

North County Anti-Trafficking Collaborative
Nurses United Against Human Trafficking
One More Child
Paving the Way Foundation
Pearl at the Mailbox
Polaris
Positive Change Consultants
Project STAND
Protect All Children from Trafficking (PACT)
Refuge For Women, Inc
Resolved Strategies LLC
Restore NYC
Rights4Girls
Safety Compass
Samaritan Village
San Diego Harbor Police Foundation
Secure Survivors
Sex Trade Survivor Caucus
Shared Hope International
Shield North Carolina
SK Sultana LLC
Southwest Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking
Stand Against Trafficking USA
Stepping Stones Network
Street Grace
Survivor Leader Network of San Diego
The Blessing Boutique Inc
The Haba Law Firm, PA
There Is Hope For Me, Inc.
Trust in Truth
United Abolitionists, Inc.
Victims2Survivors US
World Without Exploitation
Yellowstone Human Trafficking Task Force
YWCA